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NEWS RELEASE

EMPORIA GUN TRAFFICKERS SENTENCED

Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Jeffrey R. Roehm, Special Agent in Charge of the Washington Field Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; and Todd Anderson, Acting Chief of the Emporia Police Department, announce the conviction and sentencing of Willie McCullough, Jr., 48, a former Emporia resident and current resident of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. McCullough was convicted on January 17, 2002, of possession of a firearm after having been convicted of a felony. The charge was the result of a firearms trafficking scheme run by McCullough between April 1998 and October 2000. He would have other individuals purchase the firearms in Emporia and would then have them transported to New York, where they were resold. Several of the firearms have been recovered in New York during criminal investigations. McCullough was held responsible for twenty-two firearms. McCullough was sentenced yesterday by United States District Judge Robert E. Judge Payne to a term of 78 months in the federal penitentiary.

McCullough's co-defendants, who included his wife, Denise McCullough, his daughter, Ebony McCullough, Dainee Bradshaw, Princess Pitt and Dillwyn Person, were each convicted of buying multiple firearms from licensed firearm dealers in Emporia for McCullough and another co-defendant, and lying on Federal Firearms Transaction Forms. They were sentenced earlier this year as follows:

Dainee Bradshaw, 28, formerly of Emporia Virginia and currently of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, was sentenced on January 24, 2002 to 30 months incarceration;

Dillwyn Person, 43, of Emporia, Virginia, was sentenced on January 24, 2002, to 15 months incarceration;

Princess Pitt, 27, of Emporia, Virginia, was sentenced on January 24, 2002, to 15 months incarceration;

Ebony McCullough, 24, formerly of Emporia, Virginia and currently of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, was sentenced January 24, 2002, to 5 years of probation, including 6 months of home incarceration.

Denise McCullough, 48, formerly of Emporia, Virginia and currently of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, was sentenced February 15, 2002, to 24 months of incarceration.

United States Attorney McNulty praised the joint efforts of the ATF offices in both Richmond and the Southern District of New York, the Emporia Police Department, the Roanoke Rapids Police Department and the New York City Police Department, who worked together to investigate illegal gun transactions in the City of Emporia and unlawful gun trafficking between Virginia and New York. He also thanked agents from the Social Security Administration and the Greenville County Sheriff's Department for their assistance.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Olivia Hawkins.